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ELY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

and

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

1966

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Officers

Medical Officer of Health:

K.S. MAURICE-SMITH, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Chief Public Health Inspector:


D.J. GWYNN, M.A.P.H.I., Cert. R.S.H. and P.H.I.E.B.
Inspector of Meat & Other Foods.

Additional Public Health Inspector:

A.P. SHAW, M.A.P.H.I., Dip. P.H.I.E.B.

Clerk/Typist:

MRS. M. MAIN.



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LOCAL INFORMATION

Area.....	66,082 acres
Number of Parishes.....	12
Rateable Value at 31.3.66.....	£301,485.
Penny rate for 1965/66.....	£1,186.
Estimated Number of Inhabited dwellings.....	4065.
Estimated mid-year population.....	14,630.

Etheldreda House,
35, St. Mary's Street,
ELY, Cambs.

ELY RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO:- The Chairman and Members,
Ely Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen - I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1966:-

1. STATISTICS:

During 1966, the usual statistics have been kept and are available.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES:

(a) Ambulances:

Two Ambulances are stationed at Ely, both being operated by the Isle of Ely County Council.

The Littleport St. John Ambulance continues to work under the agency agreement with the County Council. This vehicle, which serves the local area, and those areas adjoining when necessary, continues to be of the greatest value. It is manned and run by local St. John members.

Assistance is given on occasions by members of the Ely St. John Ambulance Division.

(b) Nursing and Clinic Arrangements:

Clinic arrangements are as for previous years. The District Nurses continue to give their willing and efficient services to all those requiring them. They greatly deserve the thanks of the Community for all that they do.

(c) Hospitals:

- (i) Tower Hospital for Chronic Sick.
- (ii) St. John's Hospital for Long-stay cases.
- (iii) The Grange Maternity Home.

These three Hospitals are under the control of the Regional Hospital Board.

3. INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

(a)

247 notifications of infectious diseases were received. The total being made up as follows:-

Infective Hepatitis.....	1.
Measles.....	190.
Whooping Cough.....	8.
Sonne Dysentery.....	37.
Scarlet Fever.....	9.
Erysipelas.....	2.

Total.....247.

(b)

The year under review has again seen a large number of measles cases. These cases as in the past years have all been of a mild type fortunately.

Immunization against measles is largely used for children in the "special risk" groups (e.g. chronic serious chest disease etc.)

(c)

Once again, I rejoice to report that this year saw no case of diphtheria in the District. For the most part it is only we older Doctors who can recall memories of this deadly disease. Likewise many younger Doctors have not seen many, if any, severe cases of whooping cough with all the attendant distress and fear. These results are due to the immunization campaign over the past twenty years. Any child can get Immunized with "triple antigen" (i.e. diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus) by their family Doctor or at a County Council Clinic. The position is exactly the same for anterior polio-myelitis. I implore all parents to see that their children are adequately safeguarded.

(d)

During the month of November there was an outbreak of mild Sonne Dysentery in the village of Sutton, and 37 cases, mostly children, were notified.

3. INFECTIOUS DISEASES: (Contd.)
(d) (Contd.)

Under my direction, your Health Inspectors made the most exhaustive enquiries and followed up every clue assiduously. Assistance, when necessary, was obtained from the Public Health Laboratory at Cambridge, but the actual cause of the outbreak could not be discovered. It was fortunate that the outbreak was contained within the limits of the village of Sutton.

A careful watch will be continued to be kept in the New Year.

(d) Tuberculosis:

No new cases were notified during the year.

After making the necessary adjustments there are now the following numbers on the Register:-

<u>Respiratory:</u>		<u>Non-Respiratory:</u>
Females	28.	6.
Males	39.	1.

The figures, therefore, remain the same as for 1965.

4. CARAVAN SITES:

No serious problems have arisen in respect of the licenced sites situated in various parts of the district. Routine inspections were made at the beginning of the year, when attention was drawn to contraventions of licence conditions on three of the multiple sites. In all, a total of 17 minor contraventions were listed, and these were dealt with informally with the co-operation of the licencees.

The demand for single sites has now reached an almost static level and, at the end of the year, there were 28 such sites scattered throughout the district. The majority of caravans are situated on the multiple residential and holiday sites at Littleport, Witchford and Stretham.

One new site for 6 caravans was authorised during the year, this being situated at Sutton Gault, and designed to meet the needs of holiday makers and anglers. It had not come into operation at the end of the year.

4. CARAVAN SITES: (Contd.)

It is pleasing to note the continued improvement in the standards of construction of residential caravans. Many of the out-dated ones have now disappeared from the multiple sites and the modern replacements tend to raise the general appearance. Complaints concerning condensation have been minimal and occupants seem to be satisfied that caravans offer a cheap, yet comfortable, alternative to permanent dwellings.

The present position concerning caravans is infinitely more satisfactory in the District, than it was say, ten years ago.

Altogether 188 vans were in use for residential purposes, and the following table shows the position regarding licenced sites at the beginning and end of the year:-

Site Licences in force at 1.1.66.

Multiple residential sites (over 5 vans)	6
Holiday sites	2
Single residential sites (1-4 vans)	25
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Total (a)	33

New Licences issued during 1966

Multiple residential sites	1
Single residential sites	3
	<hr/>
Total (b)	37

Sites discontinued	2
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<u>Site Licences in force at 31.12.66</u>	Total (c)	35
		<hr/>

5. FACTORIES ACT 1961:

The following details give the prescribed particulars which are required by Section 153(1) of the Act.

No narrative comments have been made, as the number of inspections would not justify generalities. The greater part of duties under the Act are undertaken by the Factory Inspectorate.

5. FACTORIES ACT 1961: (Contd.)

1. Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors).

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written Notices (4)	Occupiers Prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by local authorities	7	3	Nil	Nil
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by local authorities	41	8	Nil	Nil
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by local authorities (excluding outworkers premises).	1	1	Nil	Nil
Totals	49	12	Nil	Nil

2. Cases in which DEFECTS WERE FOUND:-

NIL.

3. There are no outworkers employed in the district.

6. FOOD CONTROL:

a) Food premises

164 inspections were made at premises where food is handled, stored and sold, and 1 mobile food shop was inspected.

6. FOOD CONTROL: (Contd.)

a) Food premises (Contd.)

The types of food businesses in the district are classified as follows:-

BAKERS AND CONFECTIONERS	5
BUTCHERS	12
CAFES	4
FRIED/WET FISH MERCHANTS	3
GENERAL PROVISION STORES	22
GREENGROCER	1
GROCERS	19
HONEY BLENDER	1
POULTRY SLAUGHTERHOUSES	2
SLAUGHTERHOUSES	1
SWEET & ICE CREAM SHOPS	6
LICENCED PREMISES	32
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TOTAL	108
	<hr/>

b) Food Hygiene

The number of visits made to food premises shows a considerable improvement on the previous year's figures, but does not give cause for complacency. Some premises received an inspection for the first time in several years and, at best, the figures indicate that only a single visit was made to each one in the course of twelve months. The frequency of visiting should be such that all premises within the scope of the Food Hygiene Regulations are inspected at least four times each year. This would enable a much better picture of general conditions to be built up, and the tendency on the part of food handlers to become a little careless would no doubt decrease if they were aware of the constant oversight of your Inspectors.

Among premises receiving visits for the first time in several years were two bakehouses, where conditions were far removed from those envisaged by Food Hygiene Regulations. In both cases informal notices were served, requiring the remedy of defects and improvements to equipment and fittings. The outcome was that one occupier decided that it would be uneconomic to modernise his premises and, consequently, closed his bakery. The other occupier proceeded to comply with the requirements and was in the process of improving conditions at the end of the year. In this second case one could see the effect of general neglect over a period of time and lack of knowledge of the Regulations.

6. FOOD CONTROL: (Contd.)

c) Ice Cream

No samples were taken during the year. There were 62 premises on the register, of which 46 were in use for the storage and sale of ice cream. These figures include one new registration applied for during the year.

d) Meat Inspection

No difficulties were experienced in the maintenance of 100% inspection of carcasses and offal at the only slaughter-house in the district. The standard charges were made for this service.

The following table gives details of carcass inspections and condemnations.

	Cattle excl. Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and lambs	Pigs	Horses
Number killed	63	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Number inspected	63	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
<u>Diseases other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</u>						
Whole carcasses condemned	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	6	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage of numbers inspected affected with disease	10%	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Tuberculosis only</u>	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Cysticercosis only</u>	Nil	-	-	-	-	-

e) Milk

No sampling of milk distributed in this district was carried out, and no matters relating to this product were referred to the Department.

7. HOUSING:

a) Council Housing Programme

Permanent Houses

No. of dwellings completed during 1966	67
No. of dwellings under construction at 31.12.66.	20
No. of dwellings provided under the Housing Acts to 31.12.66.	1688
No. of pre-war dwellings improved by the provision of standard amenities during 1966.	136
No. of pre-war dwellings under improvement at 31.12.66.	115
No. of pre-war houses improved since introduction of the scheme in 1958	485

Temporary Houses

There is no temporary housing accommodation provided by the Council.

b) Private Enterprise Housing

Permanent Houses

No. of dwellings completed during 1966	95
No. of dwellings under construction at 31.12.66.	89
No. of dwellings completed since April 1945.	674

c) Subsidised Agricultural Housing

No. of dwellings completed during 1966	2
No. of dwellings completed since April 1945	* 44
No. of dwellings completed since commencement of scheme in 1938	72

(* This figure is included in the 674 shown at (b) above).

7. HOUSING: (Contd.)

d) Improvement of Private Dwellings

Discretionary Grants

No. of dwellings improved or provided during 1966.	12
Total of grants paid during 1966	£4,176: 0:0.
No. of dwellings improved since 1949	240.
Total of grants paid since 1949	£62,546: 0:0.
Average grant per dwelling	£260:10:0.

Standard Grants

No. of dwellings improved during 1966	33
Total of grants paid during 1966	£6,198: 0:0.
No. of dwellings improved since 1959	323
Total of grants paid since 1959	£44,186: 0:0.
Average grant per dwelling	£136:15:0.

The encouraging progress on the improvement of older dwellings has again been maintained and, in fact, increased. A total of 45 houses were improved (28 owner/occupied: 17 tenanted) which was an increase of 8 over the previous year. The total number of properties improved since the schemes were first introduced now stands at 563. Out of a stock of pre-war houses numbering 2,600 this indicates that nearly 20% have benefitted from grant aid.

e) Slum Clearance

No. of Demolition and Closing Orders made, and Undertakings accepted, during 1966	22
No. of families re-housed by Council from unfit dwellings during 1966	10

The previous year had seen the introduction of a comprehensive programme for slum clearance. This programme was revised during the early months of 1966 and is now a ready reference to all properties in the district which, for one reason or another fall below the standards of fitness set out in Section 4, Housing Act 1957. Eliminating the "fringe" properties, which could be improved, the Council were informed that 92 properties required formal action by 1970.

7. HOUSING: (Contd.)

e) Slum Clearance (Contd.)

The rate of progress has been steady, but the speed with which one can effect the re-housing of families must necessarily depend on the availability of alternative accommodation. The continued building of flats and bungalows for the older citizen will undoubtedly help to alleviate a number of present problems.

f) General

Last year, I commented on the provision of showers in place of the conventional bathrooms in old person's dwellings, and after a year's further thought, I would not retract one word of what I said.

This year has seen the materialization of a very satisfactory project in the village of Haddenham - viz: the opening by Councillor Miss ff. Tebbutt of the Camping Close Flats. These flats are self-contained, have a room for community use, and there is a Warden in charge to keep an eye on the occupants, to see that all is well and, if necessary, secure assistance for those requiring aid of any sort. This scheme is in my opinion quite ideal, and I cannot praise it high enough. I feel the Council deserves the congratulations and thanks of the whole district.

This is the first of these units to be built in the area of this council, and similar schemes for Sutton, Little Downham and Littleport were in various stages of progress at the end of the year. It is to be hoped that many others will follow.

8. OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES:

Routine inspections were made at 73 registered premises involving 154 visits.

9 premises were registered for the first time during 1966, bringing the district total to 94.

A total of 37 contraventions were dealt with by informal action and mainly involved heating facilities, first aid provision and general cleanliness of sanitary accommodation.

9. REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL:

With major changes and improvements over the previous two years it could well have been assumed that this subject would only merit very limited space in the report.

However, the importance of the service is underlined by the fact that, yet again, I must give details at some length.

For the first half of the year operations were quietly routine. Negotiations were put in hand for the use of the large gault pit at Stretham, the Council having been thwarted in their attempt to secure the old river channel at Burnt Fen, Littleport.

All this time the tipping space at Portley Hill was rapidly decreasing and a serious threat to disposal arrangements was only averted by taking over a disused section of dyke at Black Bank Drove. Precautions were taken to ensure that no nuisance was caused to nearby dwellings and agricultural premises, and the mobility of the Chaseside 700 Loadmaster, while still having to deal with the other tips at Littleport and Haddenham, proved its worth for bulldozing, compaction and covering.

In June, the preliminary works of providing a new entrance and access road to the Stretham Tip commenced. During this work an interesting "7-days wonder" occurred when bones, presumed to be from a pre-historic animal, were uncovered. The discovery took place very close to the spot where, 14 years ago, the remains of a 70-80 ft. long plesiosaurus were unearthed. Early hopes were that a similarly large discovery would be made, but experts called in from the Cambridge Archaeology & Ethnology Museum were only able to locate 11 segments of the vertebral column and positive identification was not pursued. One side effect was the splendid opportunity presented to local school children to visit the site in organised parties to make their own investigations.

With the new excavations completed, the next stage of preparation involved the netting of fish, and the abstraction of nearly four million gallons of water. A considerable amount of background activity was also necessary as the entire collection schedule needed revision. In anticipation of this, a third collection vehicle had been ordered at the latter end of 1965, and this was delivered for service in August 1966. Extra manual staff was also employed.

On the 5th September the first loads were tipped and, for the first month, the consolidated refuse was used to extend the entrance road in the form of a ramp into the base of the pit. To this point everything was in our favour. The testing time came when the rainfalls for October and November soared well above the average, and conditions of the entrance and ramp surface beggar description.

9. REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL: (Contd.)

Nevertheless, tipping proceeded in a satisfactory manner with complete control and, having overcome the teething troubles, I am confident that this project will amply justify the Council's action in securing a reasonably long term tipping facility.

While the annual expenditure on refuse collection and disposal has nearly trebled in four years; the Council now has a fleet of modern vehicles in full-time use, together with a standby side-loader for emergency purposes. The Chaseside 700 Loadmaster is in daily use on tip control.

It is anticipated that no heavy expenditure is likely during the next two or three years, unless a drastic change, such as the introduction of a back-door collection service, is called for.

Finally, my appreciation to the drivers and loaders, who have again coped adequately with the changes thrust upon them. They have closer continuous contact with all members of the public than any other section of the Council's staff, and it is to their credit that they are often praised but seldom abused.

10. RODENT AND PEST CONTROL:

An acceptable level of control of vermin and pests was maintained during the year. Apart from the usual service given to householders, and the supply of ready mixed poisons in bulk, the Council's own house was kept in order by frequent treatments of refuse tips, sewers, sewage works and watercourses.

It is still not widely known that The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, lays specific obligations on occupiers of land (other than agricultural land) to notify the local authority of infestations of rats on that land. Also the local authority may serve notices on owners and occupiers of infested land specifying treatments, structural repairs and other works. If we relied on this method only the effect on the administrative side of the Department would be disastrous. It is for this reason that we rely so much on the co-operation of occupiers of business premises, farms and small-holdings in carrying out their own baiting and poisoning programme.

The local branch of the N.F.U. have assisted by reminding members of the seriousness of rodent infestations, and of the need to wage a continuous campaign against vermin. It is worth remembering that a few shillings spent on poison will save a few pounds worth of damage, to say nothing of the reduction of a health hazard to persons working in places frequented by rats.

10. RODENT AND PEST CONTROL: (Contd.)

The visits and treatments carried out during the year are as follows:-

(i) Rats and Mice

Complaints received:		229
Inspections:	Dwelling houses	353*
	Business premises	115*
Treatments of:	Dwelling houses	296*
	Business premises	30*
Surveys and treatments of:	Refuse tips	181
	Sewage plants	97
	Watercourses	89

(ii) Other Pests

Complaints received:		74
Inspections:	Dwelling houses	104*
	Business premises	24*
Treatments of:	Dwelling houses	83*
	Business premises	9*
Surveys and treatments of:	Refuse tips	37

(* These figures include secondary visits and follow-up treatments).

Sewer treatments were carried out in 5 parishes.

11. SEWAGE DISPOSAL:

a) Sewage Schemes

The year under review saw, once again, steady progress towards the time when public sewers would be available in all parishes.

Sewage schemes in operation at 1st January, 1966:-

LITTLEPORT
SUTTON
STRETHAM
MEPAL
WITCHAM
WITCHFORD

11. SEWAGE DISPOSAL: (Contd.)

a) Sewage Schemes (Contd.)

Sewage schemes brought into use during 1966:-

HADDENHAM	-	commissioned in February
LITTLE DOWNHAM	-	commissioned in May
COVENEY	-	commissioned in September

Sewage schemes in progress, or proposed, during 1966:-

ALDRETH

Approval given in September.
Tenders sought during December.

LT. THETFORD

Approval in principle was given in September but the Ministry was not satisfied as to the urgency of the scheme.

On the submission of further evidence from the Chief Public Health Inspector as to serious pollution of watercourses on three sides of the village, the Ministry allowed the scheme to proceed.

Contract documents were being prepared at the end of the year.

WILBURTON

Work commenced in March, and very satisfactory progress was maintained at every stage. The contractors were well ahead of programme dates at the end of the year.

LITTLEPORT
(Extensions)

Tenders were received during January and work commenced in April. After a good start, work was found to be slowing down by September and difficulties with the contractors were being experienced. Serious doubts existed at the end of the year as to whether the contractors could fulfil their obligations.

OTHER WORKS

The provision of additional sludge drying beds at the Witcham and Witchford disposal works was completed in October.

The remaining schemes for Black Horse Drove, Wentworth, Wardy Hill and Pymore were in the course of preparation at the end of the year.

Following lengthy discussions, and the seeking of Counsel's opinion, the Council rescinded their earlier decision to require contributions towards the cost of new sewers as provided by Section 12, Public Health Act 1961.

11. SEWAGE DISPOSAL: (Contd.)

b) Sewage Samples

All disposal works in the district discharge effluent to watercourses in the catchment area of the Great Ouse River Authority. The Authority's Inspectors took 15 samples from established works of which 13 were stated to be satisfactory and within the limits of consent to discharge.

The unsatisfactory samples came from Stretham and Littleport, but did not indicate any serious breakdown or inefficiency of the works.

A further 5 samples were taken from the new installations at Haddenham, Little Downham and Coveney. These all proved to be satisfactory and the Pollution Prevention Officer formed the opinion that all three works were settling down well.

c) Cesspools

The use of private contractors for the emptying of cesspools and septic tanks was continued during the year. Small sewage disposal plants on Council estates were emptied under general contract, while private cesspools were emptied on individual requests from occupiers.

Although this system should work well in theory there are a number of problems which arise in practice. It is not possible to provide adequate supervision of the service and there is no control of time spent on each job. Disposal of the tanker contents is a major difficulty, and the sludge beds provided at the old Littleport sewage works have proved inadequate for this purpose.

The Council must soon be asked to review their policy in the light of experiences over the past few years and, with the virtual completion of all sewage schemes, decide on future methods.

There can be little doubt that the operation of their own equipment would bring benefit all round. Apart from the stricter control of the service, it would be possible to give more frequent emptyings, and the cesspool emptying vehicle could be usefully employed desludging sewer dykes. The controlled disposal of contents would be an added advantage.

12. WATER SUPPLY:

(For the following information I am indebted to Mr. F.W. Sanders, Engineer to the Ely, Mildenhall and Newmarket Water Board).

a) General

"It was again unnecessary to impose any restriction on the use of water this year, but during the short spell of hot weather the supply was rather uncertain and deficiencies occurred in a few areas where the mains were too small. The above average rainfall of 1965 and 1966 has replenished the underground resources depleted by the previous four dry years.

Progress has been made on the two major schemes of Woodditton (Lower Links) and Beck Row. The former will be in use in part by the summer of 1967 and should assure the supply to Newmarket and the southern part of the Board's area for some years to come. The Beck Row scheme will not be available until 1968 and it is anticipated that there may be difficulties in the supply to the Ely Rural District in the coming summer.

162 new dwellings were connected to mains supply in the Ely Rural District area during the year.

b) Beck Row Pumping Station (Ely Rural District Supply Zone).

It is evident that there is an abundant supply of water at this station. The water is only a few feet below the ground and the supply so good that there is practically no difference between the rest and pumping water levels. The only trouble is that the pumping plant is obsolete and uneconomic and the mains from this station to Littleport and Haddenham are too small to convey the volume of water required.

The supply to the Ely Rural District was barely maintained throughout the year with occasional assistance from an auxilliary pump transferring water from Ely. The situation will be improved when the new 'Beck Row' scheme is completed but this will not be until 1968 and difficulties in the summer of 1967 must be anticipated. Some building development has taken place in the area and it has been necessary to lay a larger main around Sutton which, though it has improved the distribution, will increase the quantity of water consumed and aggravate the overall supply position in the summer.

Consideration is being given to installing a temporary booster pump in the 8-inch main in the vicinity of Stretham to increase the volume of water delivered along this line from Beck Row.

12. WATER SUPPLY: (Contd.)

c) Medical Supervision

The Board is indebted to the Medical Officer of Health of the district councils and the Public Health Inspectors for advice and assistance in matters of health and hygiene; also to the Director of the Public Health Laboratory and his staff.

During the year, each of the Board's employees engaged on waterworks was given a routine examination supervised by the Medical Officer of Health of the district council.

On one occasion when it was necessary to send a diver into the Ely water tower, this operation was supervised by the Medical Officer of Health.

d) Quality and Treatment of Water

The bulk of the water supplied is derived from the chalk and is clear, bright, free from metals, neutral in reaction but hard. It conforms to the highest standard of organic quality.

Over the last four or five years there have been a score or so complaints of "chemical" taste. These complaints have been scattered widely throughout the Board's area but recently there has been a preponderance in the greensand water area. Usually the complaints disappear after a time but some have persisted.

No satisfactory explanation can be found. The complaints follow no pattern and it often happens that a person notices the taste from his own tap but taps in adjoining houses are clear. In a number of cases the taste has been associated with new plumbing work and there are indications that the taste is due to tap washers.

The trouble probably occurs in the consumer's services but an investigation into the causes of taste is being carried out by the Water Research Association who have sent a team of scientists to the area to collect information."

e) Fluoridation

With very great regret I note that during the year the Council has not found it possible to agree to the Fluoridation of water in an effort to protect the dentition of the children resident in the district.

12. WATER SUPPLY: (Contd.)

e) Fluoridation (Contd.)

With respect I must point out that no authoritative medical evidence has been published establishing the possibility of any harm to the population following Fluoridation.

I trust the Council will find it possible to agree to this precaution in the near future.

13. WATERCOURSES AND SEWER DYKES:

The Council has a continuing responsibility for routine maintenance and cleansing of over 1500 chains of Awarded Watercourses and Sewer Dykes. In addition, approximately 150 chains of ditches taking sewage effluent are cleansed by the Council in the light of "accepted practice".

The adequate maintenance of the dykes and watercourses has been a problem, and one which has now come to serious proportions due to lack of staff and proper mechanical aids. A solution appeared in sight when the Littleport & Downham Internal Drainage Board indicated their willingness to carry out works on behalf of the Council. This would have involved 1032 chains where an annual roding programme would have been undertaken plus a dragline cleansing every seven years. Unfortunately, the Board has had labour shortages and, obviously, have had to give priority to its own duties. Consequently, we are no better off than we were four years ago and the only regular contract is for the roding of 256 chains, comprising the Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 Public Drains at Stretham.

Only one man is employed to execute the general programme, and he has to be taken off this work very frequently to act as relief refuse collector when other manual staff are sick or on leave.

The present position is that urgent work to dykes and watercourses is carried out following complaint, and all others are having to be left without attention. How long this situation can exist before major troubles develop remains to be seen.

No proper survey of open sections or culverts has been carried out for three years.

14. MISCELLANEOUS:

a) Animal Boarding Establishments

Three premises are licenced under the 1963 Act. Annual inspections were made and the premises found to be of satisfactory standard.

b) Clean Air Act

No problems were encountered during the year which required action of a formal nature.

c) Game Dealers

There are two persons licenced by the Council to deal in game.

d) Petroleum Regulations

There were 109 annual licences issued at the beginning of the year. New installations were subjected to standard pressure tests, all with satisfactory results. Revenue from licence fees amounted to £68:15:0d.

e) Public Conveniences

The only public convenience provided in the district is situated on the A.10 trunk road near the centre of Littleport.

A modernisation programme was put in hand at the beginning of the year and wash basins, soap dispensers and warm air hand dryers were installed. These improvements have met with favourable comments, and the facilities are undoubtedly appreciated.

Although no complaints have been received of nuisances being caused through a lack of conveniences elsewhere in the district, the increasing use of both the A.10 and A.1123 leads me to suggest that mis-use of lay-bys may well become a problem.

Nearly two years ago, the County Council was advised to provide adequate indication of the position of public conveniences by suitable road signs but, so far, no tangible results are to be seen.

14. MISCELLANEOUS: (Contd.)

e) Public Conveniences (Contd.)

The provision of conveniences to serve through traffic on trunk and main roads involves District and County Councils. Experiments have been made on the A.40 by the Oxfordshire C.C. which provided utility conveniences on a lay-by, and made careful observations on usage. This has been, by all accounts, a successful venture and formed the basis of further installations.

In our own district consideration could well be given to the provision of facilities at Stretham, Haddenham, Sutton or Mepal.

f) Schools

No routine inspections were made, other than to school meal centres, and I have no comments to make.

g) Street Naming and Numbering

With continued development taking place, several schemes of new numbering, or re-numbering, were made. Further name boards were provided to give clearer indication of roads in various parishes.

15. GENERAL DISTRICT INSPECTION:

HOUSING ACTS

Inspection of dwelling houses	212	
Improvement Grant inspections	82	
Improvement Grant enquiries	68	
Inspection of demolition works	5	
General surveys	4	
	<u>4</u>	<u>371</u>

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS

Drainage	150	
Rodent and Pest control	37	
Animal nuisances	1	
Offensive accumulations	27	
Refuse collection and disposal	181	
Verminous premises	4	
General	7	
	<u>7</u>	<u>407</u>

15. GENERAL DISTRICT INSPECTION: (Contd.)

<u>FOOD AND DRUGS ACT</u>		
Bakehouses	11	
Butchers	42	
General Food Shops	85	
Milk Roundsmen	4	
Cafes, Canteens.	13	
Fish Traders	6	
Hotel and Licenced Premises	2	
Ice Cream Traders	1	
Mobile Food Shop	1	
Meat Inspection	52	
	<u>217</u>	
<u>CARAVAN SITES ACT</u>		
Site inspections		<u>73</u>
<u>OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES</u>		
Registration queries	7	
Inspections	163	
	<u>170</u>	
<u>INFECTIOUS DISEASES</u>		
Visits to private houses	530	
Visits to shops, schools, etc.	8	
	<u>538</u>	
<u>FACTORIES</u>		
Inspections		<u>12</u>
<u>PETROLEUM REGULATIONS</u>		
Licencing enquiries	24	
Pressure testing	9	
	<u>33</u>	
<u>OTHER VISITS</u>		
Street naming and numbering	44	
Animal Boarding Establishments	1	
Noise abatement	1	
Water safety	4	
Sundry	191	
	<u>241</u>	
TOTAL INSPECTIONS		<u>2062</u>

16. GENERAL COMMENTS:

The Department has completed another very full year of work, of which the Council can be justly proud.

However, every year the Department has a greater load of work due to an ever increasing amount of central legislation.

So far the Department has been able to contain most of this load, but the time will come when as it is at present constituted, the Department will find it unable to do the impossible.

As it is, I can only commend to the Council the efficient and vigorous efforts of your Inspectors.

There has been no lessening of the amount of Regulations, Circulars and other Ministry communications received during the year. The following list gives details of those which affect the Department in some measure:-

Public Health (Leprosy) Regulations 1966.
Circular 26/66 - Gypsies.
Oil Heaters Regulations 1966.
Meat Inspection (Amendment) Regulations 1966.
Circular - Poultry Inspection.
Circular 52/66 - Slaughterhouses Act 1958.
Technical Circular No. 17 - Ultra Sound and the Control
of Rodents & Birds.
Building (Second Amendment) Regulations 1966.
Alkali etc., Works Order, 1966.
Code of Practice - Hygiene in the Bakery Trade.
Slaughterhouse (Hygiene)(Amendment) Regulations 1966.
Food Hygiene (Market, Stalls & Delivery Vehicles)
Regulations 1966.

17. PERSONAL:

Once again, I put on record my very grateful thanks to Mr. D.J. Gwynn for his efforts during the year, to his great assistance to me, and above all for his cheerful co-operation. He has been very ably supported by Mr. Shaw, whom I wish also to thank most warmly.

Mr. Gwynn has been of the utmost help to me in compiling this Report.

17. PERSONAL: (Contd.)

I trust that my colleagues the Clerk, Mr. J.E. Ward, the Deputy Clerk, Mr. Walter Parr, and the Engineer & Surveyor, Mr. Williams, will also accept my cordial thanks for their never failing assistance and help whenever I asked them.

I have the honour to be,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

K.S. MAURICE-SMITH,

Medical Officer of Health
Ely Rural District Council.

October 1967.

Public Health Department,
Council Offices,
11, Lynn Road,
ELY, Cambs.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is once again my pleasure to recall the events of another year's work in the form of this report. One wishes that more could have been accomplished, but steady progress has been maintained, and I am most grateful to the Council members who endorsed many forward looking recommendations during 1966.

I have heard it said that those who cannot do the job are very willing to talk about it, and those who can do the job have no time to talk about it. Hopefully I suggest that this report catches something of both sides of that situation. Unlike some sections of government we, in the public health sphere, find that much can be achieved by just talking to people about our work, and we welcome as wide an audience as possible. One has only to look at the many subjects covered by this report to realise that we have contact with every section of the community and affect everyone's lives in some way at some time. The local press has been very helpful in ensuring that the public is well informed of our activities.

Necessarily, the final report can only highlight the more important happenings but, in the preparation stage, much more ground is covered. It may be thought that time is wasted in seeking out the information but this is not so. Indeed it is a valuable experience to go through various files, monthly reports and associated documents to refresh the memory on past problems and events. It serves to show how quickly an apparently insurmountable problem of the moment can fade into the background.

There has been further legislation to cope with and it has become virtually impossible to incorporate the new work into an already over-loaded programme. Routine visits continue to suffer and I am no nearer the point where I can say that a satisfactory coverage has been given to the inspection of food premises, caravan sites and sub-standard houses. So often an earnest start is made in tackling these repetitive duties but the balance is upset by complaints of nuisances and other matters which require immediate action. The investigation of an alleged nuisance must be made without delay, and we would bear the brunt of criticism if any serious public health menace arose because of our neglect or lack of diligence in dealing with insanitary conditions. Every member of the public who comes to us with a specific public health problem expects our undivided attention. That this is not always possible is regrettable, but inevitable.

The individual sections of the report carry adequate comment on specific subjects. Some things, however, are best dealt with in general terms and I will make brief reference in the following paragraphs to other items of interest.

I had, for some time, been concerned that plans were being submitted to the Council for approval under Building Regulations which often showed the construction or conversion of premises to be used as food premises, offices, shops, factories, etc. While the plans were passed by virtue of compliance with Building Regulations it was often found that additional fittings or even structural alterations were eventually needed in order that the premises might comply with other legislation. This was leading to confusion and created a poor image of the Council in the minds of developers. With the co-operation of the Engineer & Surveyor I now see all deposited plans and am able to draw the early attention of developers to various points which would not be covered by Building Regulations.

One of the district's natural features has been the subject of increasing interest. I refer, of course, to the local waterways. Apart from the now established boat-yard in the Littleport Dock area, proposals were received for the development of a Marina alongside the river between Stretham and Little Thetford, and for berthing and boat-yard facilities near Earith Bridge. In view of the increasing use of the rivers, contact was maintained with the Great Ouse River Authority regarding pollution by the indiscriminate deposit of waste from pleasure craft.

While there is an obvious increase in water-borne traffic, there is no decrease in road traffic and, with the A.10 road running through the district, we have the problem of dealing with litter created by the passing motorist. All lay-bys have been provided with receptacles for litter and an agreement was entered into with the County Council for regular clearance. This work has been incorporated into normal refuse collection schedules and has not presented us with any difficulties. An agreed payment is received from the County Council in respect of this arrangement.

Finally, I am pleased to reflect on a year of stability so far as staffing is concerned. While written records are always available there is nothing to match the more intimate knowledge born of personal contact with the people in one's own community. This can hardly be achieved when staff changes occur too frequently, and I am thankful that we have at least had the advantage of continuity in that respect.

During my enforced absence from the office towards the end of the year, Mr. Shaw was able to accommodate the extra work placed upon him in a perfectly adequate manner. It was most unfortunate that, being single handed, he had the additional burden of investigating a number of cases of a mild dysentery outbreak at Sutton.

I am indebted to Mr. Shaw for his willing assistance, and also to Mrs. Main for keeping a steady hand on the routine affairs of the office and cheerfully coping with the diverse nature of her work. As always, Dr. Maurice-Smith has given the benefit of his experience which ensures that the public can receive the widest possible advice when they have need to turn to us. I also record grateful thanks to all my colleagues in the office, and to the Chairmen of the Council and its Committees for their ready help and co-operation.

Your obedient servant,

D.J. GWYNN,

Chief Public Health Inspector.

October 1967.

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